



# EXTRAORDINARY SACRIFICE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL, AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED

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## ABSTRACT

This paper tends to study sacrifices in Khaled Hosseini's third published novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*. He is an eminent Afghan Origin-American writer. He has written three novels. *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And The Mountains Echoed* (2013). The present study is a humble attempt to describe the sacrifices and explain its action and values in the life of characters in the novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*. Hosseini skilfully conveys the hardship, pain, love and memory loss in this novel. He also describes how sacrifices changed the value of life. Characters have to suffer a lot. Baba Ayub loses his memory, Saboor becomes isolated, Abdullah has Alzheimer, Masooma wants to die for her sister etc. This paper has its basis in qualitative research because the data are in the form of either quotations or descriptions. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. To analyse the data, the researcher has applied the objective approach and explained the sacrifice done by the characters.

**KEYWORDS:** Sacrifice, Pain, Love, Memory Loss, Suffering.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Americana*, vol. 22:559. Literature is one of the great creative and universal means of communicating the emotional, spiritual or intellectual concerns of mankind. *Cambridge Dictionary* defines Sacrifice as "to give up something else considered more important (wealth, energy, thoughts even time.)" Sacrifice is just another form of love, in true love, there must be sacrifice. Khaled Hosseini, established as an eminent contemporary writer in a post-modernist fashion, can blend reality and fiction in a way that awakens empathy in his reader. Being a novelist he is credited with three novels, in the third published novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, he beautifully portrays the picture of love and sacrifice. The love for a family is an inseparable part of life. Love doesn't need to be perfect but it needs to be truly expressed. True love shows when there are challenges and someone overcomes challenges. So true love must be willing to sacrifice. The action of sacrifice is hard to do but in life sometimes we need to sacrifice our beloved thing to secure our family. In the novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, the sacrifice is in the form of familial. In the chapter first and second we see a deep message in the story which was told by Saboor to his children. In this chapter, he often repeated the quote, "A finger is cut to save the hand," to prepare his children's minds to be strong if we have this type of situation. Just like in chapter first, the father Baba Ayub gave his favourite child to the div. The same image of sacrifice is shown in chapter second, Saboor has to give up their one and only daughter due to poverty. Though, sacrifice refers to a variety of qualities and deeds that people do to bring good to others because the act of selflessness is important for understanding the nature of humanity as a whole. People make sacrifices in the name of love to protect others, to respect others and make a shield for others.

## METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer has applied a qualitative method because it is descriptive. The data were collected in the form of quotations or descriptions.

## The Procedure of the Research

The data has been taken from both primary and secondary

sources. Detailed analysis of the novel is the primary source whereas Internet browsing, and reading the articles were the secondary sources. While analysing the novel the writer has applied an objective approach.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the actual meaning of sacrifices and their impact on other characters in the novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, by Khaled Hosseini. This paper also highlights how sacrifices can change the life of a person. In this novel, we analyse four characters who have sacrificed their lives to save other characters. The first and foremost sacrifices we witnessed in the case of a story which was told by Saboor to their children. The story of a div (giant) and a farmer Baba Ayub, who lived in a little village named Maidan sabz. In this story, he creates a typical environment where life was so hard in this village. It was a bleak place, there was no proper food and water but Baba Ayub found himself fortunate because he has a loving family.

In this narrative, a div came to a village and caught one child from a home. And on one unfortunate day, there is a turn of Saboor's family. He doesn't want to give his favourite son (Qais) to Div. But he was helpless because if he didn't give his son to the div. Div will kill his other child, and for the sake of other children, he gave his favourite son Qais to Div. The consequence of separation leads to this:

He didn't work, didn't pray, hardly ate. His wife and children pleaded with him, but it was no good. His remaining sons had to take over his work, for everyday Baba Ayub did nothing but sit at the edge of his field, alone, wretched figure gazing towards the mountains. He stopped speaking to villagers. (7)

From the above line, we understand that this man sacrifices his favourite son to save other children. After the son is taken by the giant, the father forgets to live his life, he neither eats nor drinks, he just lives in the memory of his son. This is the core sacrifice of the novel because the story of the protagonist's family's sacrifice depends upon the same condition. As Saboor told his children:

"A finger had to be cut to save the hand." (6)

One fine day he wakes up, and without telling anyone, he makes a plan to pick up his son from Div's house. After travelling for a few days, he reached Div's house and he saw that his son was playing. He called his son but the Div told him that he would neither hear his voice nor recognize him. Then Div gave him two conditions: either take back his son in poverty or let him have better food and education. Baba Ayub called him you are beastly cruel, then Div replied him, "Cruelty and benevolence are but shades of the same colour." (14)

Baba Ayub decides to let Qais stay because he underscores the idea that what often seems to be terrible can turn out to be beneficial. Before Ayub leaves, the Div, sympathetic to Ayub's guilt, gives him a bottle of liquid that makes him forget everything about his son Qais. However, he returns home and forgets about his son Qais.

The second sacrifice which the writer notices is the sacrifice made by Saboor's family. Saboor's family also sacrifices their daughter for the wealthy Wadhathi family. Uncle Navi arranges the sale of Pari to the Wadhathi family because he is doing a job in this family. Saboor was in a great dilemma - should he sell just a three-year-old daughter Pari to save other children or to keep Pari with him in poverty? He has given up his one and only daughter because he doesn't want his daughter to live a life in poverty. He just wants his daughter to lead a better life. Because he had already lost one of his sons due to poverty, he didn't have enough money to buy necessary stuff for his child, to save him from the chilly winter.

His sacrifice allowed his whole family to survive because they had nothing to eat. So, they take a lot of cash instead of his daughter, to get their family on track. But whatever he thinks will not become reality. The whole family suffers a lot; they go into deep grief, Saboor finds himself disappointed and feels very isolated just like everything is gone with Pari. As Abdullah explained how his father's life changed when he had left the Pari with Wadhathi's family.

Maybe, Abdullah thought, Father had sold the Wadhathis his muse as well.

Gone.

Vanished.

Nothing left.

Nothing said. (54)

Both the children, Abdullah and Pari, were very close to each other, so this separation creates a huge amount of tension and grief in their life. They share everything. By this separation both brother and sister cannot make sense of what they should do. They cannot accept these things. After a few months, Abdullah suffered from Alzheimer disease. And at the end of the novel Pari only remember the red wagon and his brother Abdullah. "A little red wagon they used on their trip to sell Pari."

This is the wagon which Pari's father used when they were going to sell Pari to the wealthy Wadhathi family. And Saboor also started ignoring Uncle Nabi because he obliged him to sell Pari. "Saboor said pointy, you've given your gifts. Now it's time to go." "...Saboor didn't want to set eyes on me again and I understood." (59)

The third sacrifice which the writer notices is the sacrifice made by Masooma for her sister Parwana. Both these sisters were obsessed with the same man, Saboor. In the early stages of life,

both sisters were very close to each other. Parwana thinks that everyone likes her sister. She also thinks that her sister is better, prettier than her. She realized that she lives in the dark shadow of her sister. Basically, "A pathetic shadow, torn between her envy and thrill of being seen with Masooma, sharing in the attention as a weed would, lapping up water meant for the lily upstream" (72) For all these reasons Parwana becomes envious towards her sister. She feels jealous that her sister gets more attention from everyone. But Masooma was just the opposite of her sister. She is very kind and generous. She has no idea what her sister feels for her.

When she was aware of the fact that her sister also likes a man whom she likes. She thinks that her "existence is punishment" (77) for both. Because her sister, Parwana devotes her entire life to caring for her after she becomes disabled.

Through this realization she took a strong step and told her sister, Parwana, to leave me in the desert to die. So that she can marry a man whom she loved, "go and marry Saboor" (78). And live a life which is full of happiness and whatever she has dreamt of.

Thus, Masooma made this sacrifice out of pure generosity because she was ready to give up her life and everything that had brought her sister joy and satisfaction.

#### Fourth Sacrifice

Pari 2nd (Abdullah's daughter) also made a sacrifice to protect her loved ones. Because when she asked her father to join the art school. He said, of course, I'm happy for you but at the same time I fear of losing is also visible on her face. She left college at a very young age. As she stated,

"I could see the struggle in his face. And the fear too. Not just fear for me and what might happen to me three thousand miles from home. But fear of me, of losing me" (422).

From the above lines, we see how much she loved her father. She sacrificed her dream of going to art school in Baltimore because she doesn't want to give the same amount of pain to her father as her grandfather did by selling his father's sister. After his sister went, his father suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and he was broken when his wife died. So, she sacrificed her happiness in the service of her father. She valued a genuine relationship and sacrificed her dream to help her father in a tough time.

#### CONCLUSION

The power and beauty of Hosseini's work is undeniable. In the novel, *And The Mountains Echoed* he beautifully portrays love, sacrifice, loyalty, kindness, hope and despair. He creates an image in the mind of the reader that sacrifice is something which goes beyond our minds. This is not a required action for us, this is the action which no one is willing to do but for unconditional love sometimes we have to sacrifice the things which we loved most.

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